THE

RAGGED SCHOOL UNION

MAGAZINE.

WE are gleaners in life's field:
One short day sums up life's story:
Humble toil blest sheaves will yield;
Efforts small win golden glory.

Have we found the "corn of wheat,"
From the hills where once Ruth wandered?
And where angel voices sweet
Sang the song which Mary pondered?

Souls for Jesus—line on line—
Seek we, small things not despising?
Selfish ease do we resign,
Works of usefulness devising?

Then our patient noonday toil
Christ's own smile of love will lighten;
And at eve glad harvest spoil
Our way home to God will brighten.

VOLUME XXIII.

LONDON
RAGGED SCHOOL UNION, 1, EXETER HALL;
KENT & CO., PATERNOSTER ROW;
JOHNSTONE & HUNTER, EDINBURGH; ROBERTSON, DUBLIN;
AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.

TO OUR READERS.

By the good hand of our Heavenly Father, Ragged School workers have completed another year's labour among our social waifs and strays. And though the past year has been a chequered one—light and shade alternately prevailing—yet we have every reason, on a review of the past, not only to thank God, but to "take courage."

The Ragged School Union commenced the year in the midst of a financial crisis; for like all religious societies, it had suffered from the diversion of funds usually devoted to home objects to aid the victims of that scandal of civilisation, the Franco-Prussian war. Happily, the appeal of the Central Society met with a cordial response: and not only did old friends readily "come to the rescue," but very many new donors showed how deeply Ragged Schools are engraven on the heart of Christian philanthropists.

Notwithstanding all that is anticipated from the ultimate action of the London School Board, facts continually crop out to show that many years must run their course before the obituary of Ragged Schools will have to be written. Like City Missionaries and Scripture Readers, who are found needful to supplement the labours of the regular ministry, so Ragged Schools have a distinct socio-religious mission amongst the lower strata of society which Government education cannot fulfil. We are glad, then, to record that the aggressive character of Ragged Schools has not ceased: and thus, whilst there was an increase this year of 1457 in scholars, no less than eighty-six operations were added to those already instituted.

It is too early to know what ultimate effect the Elementary Education Act of 1870 will have on our *Day* Schools. Several have been offered to the School Board, who have accepted some, but only for one year, till their large Central Schoolrooms are built. A few more have preferred to connect their Day School with the Privy Council, as they consider that thereby their home missionary work can be carried on with less interference. But many of our friends are sanguine in the impression that they can hold the ground they have occupied so many years; and hence they are determined not to falter in their conflict with social vice, and its giant shadow misery.

Our Serial has never been restricted to the Schools in the Metropolis; our aim being to be the organ of all Ragged Schools, whether provincial or foreign. Hence last year there were copious notices of kindred work in the Provinces, Scotland, and Ireland, as well as in Spain and Italy—our pages gladly recording the successful establishment of the first Free Mission School in the ex-capital of Popery, Rome. In every place we are glad to report that a great work is being done in bringing young and old to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.

We cannot close this review of another year's labours without thanking those who have aided us by their contributions or suggestions. Many who cannot tender this service can render an equally valuable one in extending our circulation in quarters where our magazine is unknown, and by earnest prayer for the work and the workers. By a combination of such efforts, with the benediction of the Holy Spirit, we may hope that our mission will be eventually accomplished. Till then our motto will be,—Never backwards, and ever upwards!

THE EDITOR.

1, *Exeter Hall, December* 1*st*, 1871.

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